To Mrs. L. J. Hale from the Author

LAYS OF NEW-BRUNSWICK.

Dirge for L. E. L. [Mrs. M'Lean.]

By JOHN K. LASKEY, author of "Leisure Hours."

"The Harp is silent and the spirit gone,
And half of heaven seems vanished from the air."
Pilgrims of the Rhine.

Touch, lightly touch the Harp!
For life has lost a portion of its gladness!
Yes, one whose melody was love's deep feeling,
Has passed away, and we are wed to sadness.
Quick tears of sorrow to my eyes are stealing—
My heart is full of weeping, and sincere,
For one, we dearly loved, has passed from life's bright sphere.

Yes, lightly touch the Harp,
Let not its deeper tones the soul awaken
And stir it to that grief, that knows no ending;
A gentler sorrow for the loved one taken
From truest hearts, that are with sorrow rending,
Befits the mourner for her of the Lyre,
For yet our hearts are warm with her soft words of fire.

Her's was no earthly spirit!
For 'round me is a spell of heaven-born beauty,
Caught from some fairy landscape in her dreaming,
And tales of love, with gentle, moral duty,—
A word unspoken,—which has caused the streaming
Of the last life-drop of a fondest heart;—
And should we not lament when such meek ones depart?

Her's were the heart and song,—
The starry sentinels of heaven's dominion,
Their spirit beauty, and long years of glowing,
And the lost sister,* borne on Time's swift pinion
To some angelic region,—these were flowing
In songs of fairy language from her lyre,
And filled us with high hopes, and being's fond desire!—

They're tones that can not die!
For in my memory ring those thrilling numbers,
That came as from some angel's lyre or singing,
When man is mute in midnight's deeper slumbers.
Yes, in my memory still those tones are ringing,
Tones of the lyre that are for ever hushed,
A melody, that from the soul pure as an angel's, gushed.

They're tones that can not die,
Of early infancy and happy childhood,
To hopes, like cloudless stars, all brilliant rising,
Painting life's scenes as bright as Nature's wildwood;
Of manhood, and old age the world despising,
And nature's scenes, and golden-palaced dreams,
And many a magic tale of fairy dells and streams.

But it is ever thus!
For thus do young hopes pass with all their splendour,
Still eager yet to cheer one heart of sorrow,
And hovering near it like a spirit tender,
They're forced to leave it to a lone to-morrow;
And thus our Sappho of old England's bowers,
Seemed but to stay to gladden life's lone and dark hours.

And it is ever thus,
For so wild Genius, like an eagle speeded,
And roaming o'er the world in radiant pluming,
Seeks for its lower kindred, thoughts high and unheeded,
And regions unexplored, forever blooming;
But little shares the glory or the gain,
And leaves its mortal home for heaven's own bright domain—

But who shall tune the Harp!
Oh! who its thrilling tones again shall waken,
That Harp of purest song and rapture breathing!—
'Tis silent now all lonely and forsaken,
And lies, perchance, where mourning flowers are wreathing.
Where is the hand that tuned it?—Still and cold,
Or in a better world, it tunes a harp of gold.

Yes, who shall tune the Harp,
As it was tuned ere life's frail link was broken?—
I hear no accent, but the low wind's sighing,
As though to tell her loss, had Nature spoken.—
Peace to the youthful dead! Her name undying
Shall live within our hearts—Joy for the spirit,
That shall a bright and glorious world for aye inherit!

St. John, N. B. April, 1839.

* Miss Landon wrote a beautiful poem on "The Lost Pleiad."